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NOTES ON REORGANISATION.

Since the unanimous adoption of the Constitution of the Church by the representatives of congregations at the special meeting in June last, the work of reorganisation has been steadily progressing. The sub-committee has held several meetings and has carefully gone through the preliminary work of compiling a set of rules for the management of the affairs of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church. These rules are to be as simple and short as possible. They will be in conformity with the existing rules of procedure of the Presbytery of Antrim, the Code of Discipline of the Remonstrant Synod, and the usage of the Free Congregations. They will, therefore, in all probability, meet with the unanimous approval of all sections of the Church.

As soon as these rules have undergone a final revision, copies of them will be sent to every congregation in the Church. At the same time congregations will be requested to hold special meetings and formally signify their acceptance of the rules and their intention of adhering to them. When all the congregations in the Church have done this the way will be clear for setting about the collection of money for sustentation and other purposes. Once the initial steps have been taken there will be little difficulty in gradually bringing the matter to a successful issue. A well organised Church affords opportunities for steady improvement in all its concerns, and for a continuance of that improvement from year to year and from generation to generation. We look upon this movement among us as the beginning of a long epoch of expansion in our Church and of improvement in the religious life of Ulster.

Some of our readers may say—Why not set about the collection of money and the formation and management of a sustentation fund by means of a committee without the formality of

rules of procedure or ecclesiastical organisation? Such a simple and direct course of action is plausible, but is open to the grave objection that in order to successfully collect money it is necessary to be able to show clearly the purposes for which that money is to be used and the manner in which it is to be managed and applied. Hence the primary need for a definite set of rules applicable to every congregation in the Church.

So convinced are we of the importance of this reorganisation scheme, not only to our own Church, but also to the community at large which will be indirectly influenced thereby, that we would strongly urge upon every member of our congregations the desirability of giving the matter the most serious consideration, and of endeavouring to promote its success by every possible means. We have a great mission. Let us see that we do not neglect it. Evidences of the need for the spread of true practical Christianity are to be found on every hand. Let us use the talent which has been entrusted to us in a way which will merit approval.

SOCIALISM AND ATHEISM.

By Rev. S. H. Mellone, M.A., D.Sc.

THERE are many different kinds of Socialism; just as there are many different kinds of Religion—some good, some bad, but the most of them a mixture of good and bad. None the less, all kinds of Socialism have one thing in common—to do away with competition. Every one who has to work for his living, knows what competition means. Professional men, lawyers and doctors, know it to their cost; so do working men and business men of all kinds. But perhaps those who feel it most bitterly are the unskilled labourers and men who are in business in a small way, for whom life is one long desperate struggle to keep their heads above water.

All criticism of Socialism should start from this point of view, and ask how far it is possible, or desirable, to abolish competition. There is nothing immoral in the proposal to abolish it. The question is one not for denunciation, but for intelligent and sympathetic consideration.

Yet before we can go a step further, we must answer this question: Is there any connection between Socialism and Atheism? The answer is, *none whatever.* There is no more reason why a Socialist should be an Atheist, than there is why an advocate of Total Abstinence should be an Atheist.

At a recent meeting of the National Council of the Independent Labour Party, the following resolution was carried: "The National Council of the Independent Labour Party denies the charge that Socialism is opposed to religion, and declares that the Socialist movement embraces men and women of all religions and forms of belief, and offers the most complete freedom in this respect within its ranks. It further denies the charge that Socialism is antagonistic to the family organisation, and reminds the public that the disintegration of the family which has been in progress for some generations is due to the creation of slums, the employment of children in factories, the dragging of mothers into workshops and factories owing to the economic pressure exerted by low wages, sweating, and other operations of Capitalism which it is the purpose of Socialism to supplant."

There is no *reason* why a Socialist should be an Atheist. But that does not alter the fact that more than one active party of Socialists do in fact make Atheism a part of Socialism. The best known of these parties consists of the followers of Robert Blatchford, editor of "The Clarion." Mr. Blatchford makes the following pronouncements an essential part of Socialist doctrine: "I deny the existence of a Heavenly Father; I deny the efficacy of prayer; I deny the Providence of God; I deny the truth of the Old Testament and of the New Testament," and more to the same effect. Books containing these teachings are constantly sold at Socialist and Independent Labour Meetings, and a leaflet containing these utterances of Mr. Blatchford, distributed by the Conservatives after a vigorous and evenly-balanced election contest in Liverpool, turned the scale, and the In-

dependent Labour Candidate was defeated.

There is reason to believe that the drift of Socialism, among all its more thoughtful adherents, is to let questions of religion alone, and still more, questions of family life. Mr. Blatchford fully recognises the wisdom of the latter course; but as regards the former, he evidently thinks that Socialism must go hand in hand with Atheism. His book "God and my Neighbour" shows that he knows nothing about religion *from the inside.* He seems to think that religion means asking God to help us and then doing nothing ourselves.

The Blatchford party among the Socialists is very strong in England, and if it becomes the dominant party among them, Socialism will disappear under a cloud of religious and anti-religious controversy. Wiser counsels exist, whether or not they will prevail; thus we find utterances like the resolution quoted above, and words like those of Mr. Bruce Glasier, editor of "The Labour Leader," who desires to sweep completely from the Socialist propaganda all controversy concerning religion.

It is not to be denied that when we look at the past, there is reason enough why Socialists, and indeed all reformers, should feel bitter, not against Christianity, but against the official exponents of Christianity. One example will suffice. Lord Shaftesbury, the great philanthropist, grandfather of the late Lord Mayor of Belfast, probably did more for wage-earners than any other man in the nineteenth century, particularly in working for legislation to relieve the intolerable and disgraceful conditions under which women and children were compelled to work in factories and mines. Lord Shaftesbury was a devout Evangelical Christian. His diary, written during the years 1841-2, contains many passages like the following:—

"Prepared as I am, I am often distressed and puzzled by the strange contrasts I find—support from infidels, opposition or coldness from religionists! I find that evangelical religionists are not those on whom I can rely. I find the clergy in many cases frigid, in some few, hostile. So it has ever been with me. The ecclesiastics as a mass are perhaps as good as they can be under any institution of things where human nature can have full swing; but they are timid, time-serving, and great worshippers of wealth and power. . . . In few instances did any mill-owner appear on the platform with me; in still fewer, the ministers of any religious denomination. . . . I had more aid from the medical than from the divine profession."

Again, speaking of his Bill to prevent little children being driven in to labour in factories, he says (referring to the House of Lords): "Bill passed through the Committee last night. In this work, which should have occupied one hour, they spent nearly six, and left it far worse than they found it. Never have I seen such a display of selfishness, such frigidity to every human sentiment, such ready and happy self-delusion. Three Bishops only present . . . . The Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury went away."

The Atheists who supported Lord Shaftesbury were far more in accord with the spirit of Christ than the professing Christians who opposed or discouraged him. "Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord." "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethern, ye did it unto Me."

The Churches have moved on in the fifty years that have passed since Lord Shaftesbury wrote the words I have quoted. In any case, to attack the teachings of Christ because of the shortcomings of those who profess to be his followers, is mere wilful blindness. And to charge the Christian Church in general, to-day, with neglecting its duty to the poor and the oppressed, would be past blindness, and would be nothing better than a lie.

WOMAN'S MISSION *(continued).*

By Miss Mellone.

WOMAN'S Mission, then, as I tried to show in my last article, is to be a "helpmeet" to man, but this does not imply that a woman should be legally or morally any more subservient to him than he to her. On this point, I cannot do better than quote the wise

words of Ruskin—"We are foolish, and without excuse foolish, in speaking of the "superiority" of one sex to the other. Each has what the other has not: each completes the other, and is completed by the other: they are in nothing alike, and the happiness and perfection of both depends on each asking from the other what the other only can give." In the first place then, woman's work is to comfort the weary and sorrowful, and to help all who come in need of her sympathy. The instinct which bids a woman do this is part of her very being: it is the outcome of that sacred maternal love which makes women the natural protectors of all who are weak and suffering. There is no happiness for women apart from this: no money or social position: no success in life, can make a woman happy, unless she feels she is serving some one else, and that some one else depends upon her.

But in what ways can this service be rendered? First in the home, as Ruskin says, by securing its order, comfort and loveliness. All will agree with this, but he goes on to say, "as a member of the commonwealth, her duty is the same, to assist in the ordering, the comforting, and the beautiful adornment of the state." For we women are members of the commonwealth: we benefit by the good ordering of public affairs, just as we most certainly suffer when they are ill ordered. Moreover, a large part of the responsibility for such ill ordering lies with us. In the first place, every woman can and should exert an indirect influence for good, by that "constant, unceasing effort to make the lives of all with whom she comes in contact better and happier," of which Mrs. Humphrey Ward speaks. But apart from this, there is a large field of work open to women who have some leisure and some capacity. And whatever objections may be urged against the claim of women to have a share in Imperial politics, there cannot be any brought forward against their use of the power they already possess to vote at municipal elections, and to sit on Boards of Guardians. The first brings us in touch with two of the fundamental social questions of the day, the temperance question and the housing question, matters over which the municipalities will probably have more control in the future than they have now, and which concern us as women most deeply and vitally. It is of the greatest importance that every woman should concern herself with both these problems, which lie at the root of nearly all the social evils of our day. The second right, to sit as guardians of the poor, I consider to be of equal importance. Sir John Russell, the great statesman, spoke of the exclusion of women's supervision from workhouses as the greatest and most fatal error in our workhouse system. That exclusion has now ceased: and it is the duty of those few who have the leisure to avail themselves of the opportunity of service thus afforded. It is indeed work for which women are particularly fitted. Women have more interest in the details of an undertaking than men, more patience in supervising the execution. Where is there greater need of these qualities than in our workhouses? Surely there is nothing unwomanly in the effort to bring about something of that sweet rule and ordering, of which Ruskin spoke, into those forlorn places where often so much unnecessary suffering is often endured, especially by the very old and by the children. The cry nowadays is all for "efficiency," yet we tolerate a workhouse system so inefficient that the average cost of each pauper supported by the rates works out to a little under 15/- per week—an amount for which any private person would undertake to give comfortable board and lodging, and make a profit into the bargain. The Poor Law administration requires the labour of women, in the first place their patient vigilance and attention to detail, to prevent the senseless waste and disgraceful peculation which too often flourish unchecked. For example, I could give the name of a workhouse where for years the number of inmates returned in the master's books was considerably in excess of the actual number in the house, until the only lady member of the Board of Guardians, suspecting something, had the number in the house on a certain day counted, and compared with the entry in the book, when the

fraud was discovered. In another case, the master's horse was taken ill through the quantity of bread which was given to him—bread which was paid for by the ratepayers, but allowed to be thrown aside as only fit for stable use.

But the *influence* of women is still more needed. The head of the convict settlement on Norfolk Island, a place where only the worst and most hardened criminals are sent, mentions the influence that his wife had over even the worst of these men, men who respected nothing and no one else, respected her, because she was fearless and gentle, and a woman. If this is the case even with these desperate outcasts, how much more might be done among the girls and women of our workhouses, especially among those girls who have been born and bred in the workhouse, leaving it only to take such situations as are open to a workhouse girl? I could multiply evidence as to the value of a woman's influence in such cases, and also in the case of female prisoners—quoting the head of one of the great convict prisons in Dublin, who speaks of the great and beneficial results produced on the female convicts by the attendance of lady visitors. Before we dismiss this matter as one which cannot concern ourselves, let us remember who it was who spoke of the condemnation meted out to those who failed to visit the sick and the prisoners, who let the naked go away unclothed, the thirsty unsatisfied. This question of feeding the hungry and clothing the naked is a more difficult one now than it was in the days when that parable was spoken, but it is a question which concerns us women deeply, and we too shall fall under that condemnation if we fail to take our share in the work. A great Unitarian preacher, Theodore Parker, said that women's influence is like charity, it begins at home, then, like charity, should go everywhere. He adds that her domestic functions as housekeeper, wife, and mother, do not or should not exhaust her powers, and pleads for wider interests and a larger field of work. That is just what I have been trying to urge in this article, adding only that we must beware lest we incur the other reproach which may be levelled against those who tend the vineyards of others, but fail to keep their own. Let the nearest duty be done first, then the next will become more clear.

The Symbol.

Over a sandy tract the wild wind blew
Its keen, cold breath;
The windlestraws about the stubble flew,
Whispering "Death."

The last leaf of the tree in the withered hedge
Fluttered away;
The nest the warbler built within the sedge
Hung in decay.

The barren sea against the headlands dun
Waged barren strife;—
Only a blood-red ray from the dying sun
Foretold of life.

FREDERIC THOMAS.

Oct. 22nd, 1892.

LORD KELVIN AND REMINISCENCES OF HIS FAMILY.

BY REV. WILLIAM NAPIER.

BY the death of Lord Kelvin on the 17th of December last, Science has lost her greatest son of modern times, and the world which reaped fruits of his great discoveries and inventions mourns his loss with an unanimity not always observed on the demise of distinguished men, whilst the transference of his remains from his Ayrshire home to the ancient Abbey of Westminster, there to repose side by side with England's most illustrious dead, has been felt to be only a fitting tribute of respect to the memory of one whose life and labours reflected honour on the nation, extended the boundaries of science and left behind him a stainless memory. Ample justice has been done to the high qualities of Lord Kelvin, many garlands of homage and of praise having been placed on his

tomb by competent and admiring hands. The attempt, therefore, to add to them would be a work of supererogation, even if we were equal to the task. Our purpose, however, in this paper, is simply to make brief reference to Lord Kelvin's attitude towards religion, supplemented by a few scraps of information which we have from time to time picked up with respect to some members of the family of which he was the most illustrious representative.

There was a time, not so very long ago, when there was no quarrel between science and religion, both moving together in friendly concert for the accomplishment of the same high ends, viz.: to establish the existence of God and set forth his glorious attributes of infinite wisdom, love and mercy, and thus to confirm the faith and increase the reverence, adoration and praise of his creatures toward Him; nor did the idea occur to any one that the study of His works in the world of Nature could have any other result than that of drawing up the mind in devout contemplation from nature to nature's God. But a philosophy (so-called) of Materialism in later years sprang up and captured many minds of great force of intellect, who, being gifted with the power of clothing their thoughts in great beauty and charm of style, succeeded in disseminating their new ideas very widely, and in loosening the hold which religion had on a tolerably large number of people. Thus it came to pass that Science was identified with Materialism, and scientific men were regarded as believers only in the "potency of matter," or adopting as their creed a cheerless Agnosticism.

Happily Lord Kelvin has redeemed Science from the reproach of irreligion, his life-long investigations and brilliant triumphs in the domain of science having never dimmed his early faith in the living and guiding providence of God; and among the many services which he has rendered to mankind, not the least is the great deliverance which he has made on this highest and most important of all subjects. On the occasion of the Jubilee of his Professorship he said: "We are absolutely forced by science to believe with perfect confidence in a directing power—in an influence other than a dynamical, or physical or electrical force. Proofs of intelligent and benevolent design lie all around." A pronouncement of this kind coming from an authority so high ought to have great weight with many minds in removing doubt and strengthening faith; it ought also to direct attention to the Argument from Design—an argument which it has long been the fashion to decry and lightly thrust aside as possessing no value on the great question of Natural Theology. It is perhaps too much to expect that even the great authority of Lord Kelvin will have the effect of reinstating it in its former place in the Theological curriculum both as an instrument of education and a convincing proof.

It has been stated that Lord Kelvin was the greatest man of science since Sir Isaac Newton and that he was equal even to him. However this may be, there were several points of resemblance between the two men. They both wore the laurels won by their unexampled achievements with the same modesty of demeanour, and rather undervalued than overestimated the services they had rendered to science and mankind. Newton's beautiful words spoken shortly before his death are well known, but will bear quotation: "I do not know what I may appear to the world: but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." Lord Kelvin's estimate of his life's work breathes the spirit of humility: "I know no more of electric or magnetic force, of the relations between ether, electricity, and ponderable matter or of chemical affinity than I knew and tried to teach to my students of Natural Philosophy fifty years ago in my first session as Professor." Another point of resemblance between these two is that they were both eminently religious men. Newton indeed, devoted a good deal of time to the study of Scripture, wrote in explanation of some of the Prophets, and a short treatise on "Two Notable Corruptions of Scripture: 1st

John v. 7 and 1st Tim. iii. 16;" and as is now well known held religious opinions similar to those professed by the members of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland. What was the theological standpoint of Lord Kelvin we do not know. It is, however, safe to conclude that a man who held, as he did, that the earth had assumed its present form *at least* twenty millions of years ago could not have accepted the Mosaic account of the Creation, nor the statement of the Fall of Adam, nor the doctrine of the Atonement as connected with that event, nor the temptation by the Serpent; and by the renunciation of these the whole structure of orthodox theology crumbles into dust. But it is unnecessary to pursue this matter further. The cardinal point is that Lord Kelvin was not a Materialist, but a devout believer in God and His superintending providence.

In the writer's young days in Belfast he heard much of Dr. James Thomson, Lord Kelvin's father, and had the pleasure of knowing several of his former students who always spoke of him in the most enthusiastic terms as a splendid teacher with remarkable power of simplification, and as a kind man who took the warmest interest in his pupils. One of tham stated that when the embryo mathematicians had succeeded in crossing the ass's bridge and safely got over other geometrical obstacles and began the study of trigonometry the kind Professor used to take a number of them out to the suburbs of Belfast and instruct them as to the method of taking the altitudes of spires and other eminent objects. It is not hard, therefore, to understand Dr. Thomson's popularity with his classes: but his memory was long kept green in Belfast by the general public and when the Queen's College was established the best educated opinion pointed to him as the most suitable man for the position of president. But clerical influence prevailed and the post was given to a cleric who had no other claims than the possession of courtly manners and a sweet voice.

The intimacy between Dr. Thomson and Dr. Montgomery was well known, and tradition said that when the latter received the degree of LL.D. from Glasgow University it was mainly through Thomson's influence. Whether in this case friendship was stimulated by theological affinity cannot be confidently known, but Dr. Thomson was always said to belong to the Liberal school. When his son, Professor James Thomson, was in the Queen's College, he identified himself with the Unitarians, and one of our deceased ministers who knew him well told the present writer that all the Thomsons were Unitarians.

Be this as it may, and no matter what school of theology Lord Kelvin favoured he was a man of pre-eminently great gifts and he used them nobly and well. His fame will increase with the passing of time, resting on the impregnable basis of great powers devoted to the service of God and man.

He will ever stand as a great man on a high pedestal, surrounded with a brightness that no vicissitudes of time can tarnish, and the lines applied by Goldsmith to the good clergyman, his father, may be applied to Lord Kelvin:

"As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

For the Children.

FIFTY YEARS AGO.

By Mrs. H. J. Rossington, B.A.

MANY of you will, I dare say, know that during the past few months there have been held not a few celebrations in honour of the survivors of the British soldiers who, just fifty years ago, fought so bravely through the dark days of the Indian Mutiny. Most of us know the story of the Mutiny, how in the spring and summer of 1857, the sepoys of the Indian army rose in rebellion, murdered their officers and their officers' wives and children, and laid siege to the principal stations in India, which were then held by British troops. The terrible siege of

Lucknow, the cruel massacre of Cawnpore, were only events in the great drama, on a smaller scale similar things were being enacted in all parts of the country. Yet, terrible as it is, the story is one in which every British man and woman feels a thrill of pride, for it shows in its every incident, the courage, the endurance, the unselfishness, and the self-sacrifice which the British nation is capable of showing whenever the need for these qualities arises. We read of the daring and endurance of the soldiers, who, terribly outnumbered as they were by the enemy, suffering from sunstroke and other effects of the heat, attacked by fever, cholera, and all the diseases common in that most unhealthy district, yet performed the most wonderful feats. On several occasions, the wearied soldiers, having marched distances varying from twenty to fifty miles in a day—an Indian day of dust and scorching heat—were surprised by a foe three or four times their number ere they had seized a moment for rest and refreshment. Still without food, they would defeat them, drive them out of entrenched positions, and follow them up to prevent their escape, before they thought of rest. We read of Stuart Beatson, attacked by cholera, being carried into action by his men, and in spite of his pain, selecting the most advantageous spot for their attack, and materially helping to win the day. We read of Mackillop of Cawnpore, who, when the enemy were seen to be continually firing at the well to prevent the English from getting water, voluntarily constituted himself captain of the well, and was killed by a shot while carrying a bucket of water to a lady and her children. Women in the besieged stations, who day by day, had to watch those dear to them being struck down by wounds or disease, controlled themselves, and did not make things worse for others by useless lamentations, but applied themselves, till they too were struck, to nursing the sick, carrying water or ammunition to the soldiers at their posts, and comforting those still weaker than themselves. Even little children followed their example and bore the heat, the sickness, the pain and the terror with very few complaints.

Now as a story this is very interesting to read about, but it sounds rather far away from us, and perhaps you will wonder why I am writing to you about it just in this place. But I want you to stop and think for a moment what all these deeds of pluck and endurance meant to those who were actually doing them at the time. And in the first place I think they meant what we call unselfishness, the power of considering others before oneself, of really loving others better than oneself, of *actually bearing something unpleasant* oneself so that someone else may be ever so little happier or more comfortable than they otherwise would have been. And in the second place it meant the habit of obedience, of obeying orders without question, without murmurs or hesitation, and with cheerfulness and speed. To bring it down to everyday matters, with which we are all so very familiar, I mean that the child who obeys quickly and cheerfully, even in such a little matter as changing his boots, or shutting the door, or going to bed, still more the child who on a rainy day will try not to tease her mother or nurse, who may be busy or have a headache, has the making, mind I say only the making (for it takes years of practice and effort to become the real thing) of the brave British men and women of the Mutiny, of whom we are all so proud. The disobedient child, who thinks about himself before everyone else, is in some ways, not in all, like the disloyal sepoys who mutinied. *He* has disloyalty in him too. I mention these very little things because as a rule it is only little things that a child, or indeed many of us, not children, can do. But when these little things are done bravely and well, then we remember the great truth—that a brave and good boy makes a brave and good man, that a brave and good girl makes a brave and good woman.

So long as we love we serve; so long as we are loved by others I would almost say that we are indispensable; and no man is useless while he has a friend.—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

THE UNITY GUILD.

CONVERSAZIONE AND LECTURE IN THE PEOPLE'S PALACE.

THE Unity Guild held its Third Meeting of the Session on Thursday, January 23rd, in the People's Palace, Donegall Road, Belfast, when about 80 members and friends came together to hear a Lecture by Mr. Robert Patterson, F.L.S., F.Z.S., M.R.I.A. In the absence of the President, Rev. W. H. Drummond, the chair was occupied by the Rev. J. A. Kelly.

The buildings known as "The People's Palace and Cripples' Institute," are permanent memorials of the self-sacrificing zeal and love-directed energy of the late Mr. A. W. Vance, whose death last May was so widely deplored. The Institutions were opened on the 6th December, 1904, by the Lord Lieutenant (Lord Dudley), and consist of the Cripples' Home and Workshops, a Home for Orphans, a Créche for babies of working women, a Great Hall, capable of seating 1,500, a Minor Hall, for school classes and lectures, and a Natural History Museum, the latter being open (free) for the entertainment and instruction of the working classes in the neighbourhood and the use of the inmates of the Cripples' Institutes. It has been named the "Patterson Museum," after the late Robert Patterson, F.R.S. (1802-1872), and consists of a fine lofty room, 75 feet long, by 25 feet wide, with an open-timbered roof, and the Curator's room and storeroom at one end, both rooms being heated by hot water. The main collections of mammals, birds, &c., are arranged along the blank wall of the room, while special subjects are illustrated in sloping cases at each window and on show tables down the centre of the room. The task of planning, as well as collecting for and filling the cases was entrusted by the Committee of the Institute to Mr. Robert Patterson, who accepted the post of Hon. Curator. The work was entirely a labour of love, and all the material obtained was generously given by a large number of friends. There are several thousands of specimens exhibited and not one was purchased. There are over 1,200 explanatory labels and maps of distribution; these labels are typed in permanent ink, and convey interesting information in the simplest English, so that the youngest visitor could learn a great deal by simply reading the labels.

The Committee of these Institutions are endeavouring to raise £7,000 to clear off the existing debt, and readers of this Magazine are invited to assist this excellent work by contributing what they can. Subscriptions may be sent to Mr. Robert Patterson, Glenbank, Holywood, Co. Down.

It was in the Museum that the members of the Guild had tea, and after a careful inspection of the various exhibits, at 8-15 o'clock all adjourned to the Minor Hall where Mr. Robert Patterson (Hon. Curator of the Museum) gave his Lecture on "Our Bird Friends in the Cradle." The lecturer pointed out that birds have no homes, their nests are merely temporary cradles for the use of their young during the first few weeks of life, and are seldom, if ever used after the young have flown. Many birds make no nest whatever and their young seem to get on quite as well as those reared in a "cradle." He split up the feathered babies he was showing into two main divisions; those who are born naked, blind and helpless, requiring the most unremitting care and feeding from their parents; and those who are born clothed and sturdy, and quite able to take care of themselves from the first moment of stepping out of the egg. Mr. Patterson illustrated these points by throwing on the screen over 100 photographs of young and old birds, taken from nature—a truly marvellous collection and a revelation to many present of the wonderful advances lately made in bird photography. Among the numerous illustrations of helpless young birds, the life-history of a young cuckoo was shown in detail, caught in the very act of murdering his fellow-nestlings. Various incidents in the domestic economy of our more familiar birds were given and then the second group—plovers, ducks and sea-birds—was dealt with in the same way. Illustrations of the protective colouring of the downy young of these birds were given in some remarkable slides, while the way they hide from danger was also

shown. Mr. Patterson closed by showing how necessary to the young was the instinct of immediate obedience to the orders of their parents which is so marked a characteristic of the "independent" youngsters. A hearty vote of thanks to the lecturer brought a most enjoyable evening to a close.

The late WILLIAM GIBSON, Esq., J.P.

Obituary.

We deeply regret to have to record the death—which occurred on Thursday, December 19th, as the result of a boiler explosion—of Mr. William Gibson, J.P., of Heathfield House, Mealough, which is situated about two miles from Ballygowan. It appears that Mr. Gibson, who used a steam engine in the granary for threshing, churning, and other work required by a farmer, was overseeing the threshing of a quantity of oats when the boiler burst with a loud crash, smashing all around it. A portion of the machinery fell upon Mr. Gibson, inflicting injuries which subsequently proved fatal. Mr. Gibson was one of the most extensive farmers in County Down, and was widely known and highly esteemed. In his capacity as a Justice of the Peace he was a prominent figure at the Florida Manor and Saintfield Petty Sessions each month. He always gave his decisions in a most impartial and careful manner. He was a prominent member of the Masonic Order, both at Moneyrea and Mealough, and was P.P.S.G.W. of Down. A Unitarian in religion, he was a leading spirit in promoting the new Lyttle Memorial School at Moneyrea, as a tribute to the memory of the late Richard Lyttle. The foundation stones of the School were laid in October last, and on that occasion Mr. Gibson was chairman—the proceedings were reported in our columns. He was looked upon by the farmers in the district as their leader in the land-purchase movement. He was a man of most upright character, integrity of purpose, generous in good causes with his means; and of hospitable and genial nature. His death is a heavy blow to his widow and family, with whom the deepest sympathy is felt, and to the entire district with which he was connected. [We are indebted to the *Newtownards Chronicle* for the use of the block giving us the picture of Mr. Gibson.]

REPORTS.

Belfast: First Church.—The Annual Meeting and Prize Distribution in connection with the Sunday School, was held in the Central Hall, on Wednesday, January 15th. In spite of the inclement weather there was a good attendance, made up of scholars and their parents, the superintendent, Mr. J. M'Williams, the teachers, and a few members of the congregation. Proceedings commenced with tea, followed by the Prize Distribution; the 37 books earned for regular and punctual attendance during the past year being handed to the recipients by the minister, the Rev. H. J. Rossington. The latter then addressed the parents and scholars, thanking the former for their hearty co-operation and support, because without their active encouragement their children would scarcely have done so

well. But while he confidently anticipated that the parents would continue to do their part, he appealed to the scholars to secure even better results for the present year. Later in the evening, several of the scholars gave a very creditable performance of the Rev. H. H. Hawkes' version of the old favorite "Cinderella," and it was fully apparent that the latter had lost none of its power of appeal, for the spectators applauded most heartily all the interesting passages, and showed their unmistakable approval at the happy ending of the play. The latter also brought to a conclusion the evening's proceedings, which throughout had been of a very enjoyable character.

Holywood.—The Annual Soiree for the children of the Sunday School connected with the First Presbyterian (Non-Subscribing) Church, was held in the Schoolroom, on Thursday evening, January 16th. Tea was served at 6-30, when there was a very large attendance of children, and later in the evening they were joined by a great many parents and other members of the congregation. After tea a very enjoyable programme was provided, the following taking part:—Miss Mabel Henderson, recitations; Master Ernest Tracey, songs; Masters Ivan and Willie M'Crum, pianoforte duet; and Miss M'Cammon, selections on the gramophone. Great interest was taken in an operetta, called "Little Jessie's Dream," which was acted by twelve of Sunday School pupils, under the management of the Misses C. M. and L. M. Patterson, with Miss M'Cammon at the piano. All the children did their parts capitally, and the performance was greatly enjoyed. The following took part:—The Misses Hilda, May, Elsie and Norah Patterson, The Misses Madge, Alice and Lucy Moore, and Masters Ivan M'Crum, Willie M'Crum, Harry Moore, Willie Harvey and Colville Patterson. The great attraction to the young people was a Christmas Tree ladened with presents, and during the evening these were distributed by Father Christmas and Mother New Year, the parts being taken by Mr. and Mrs. Coleman. The singing of the National Anthem concluded a very successful evening.

Kilwaughter.—According to custom and necessity this Sunday School has closed until April. On 27th December, at 7 o'clock in the evening, there was a large assemblage of scholars, teachers, parents and friends in the Countess Balzani National School. After tea, served in the Agnew Memorial National School, the Rev. J. Kennedy took the chair, and introduced the different items of a most interesting programme. Mr. and Mrs. M'Keown had been for some weeks practising teachers and pupils possessed of musical tastes and abilities, and so were in a position to submit the Cantata, "Robinson Crusoe," which, from start to finish, was rendered in a style reflecting credit on all concerned. The connecting narrative was read by the Rev. Mr. Buchannan, Rector of the Parishes of Kilwaughter and Cairncastle. An Episcopalian clergyman, taking a part so prominent in a Unitarian Sunday School entertainment, is a circumstance unusual, if not unique. At the conclusion of the Cantata, Mrs. Sam. M. Bailie gracefully distributed a number of Book Prizes for good attendance since April, 1907. But a pleasant surprise awaited Mr. and Mrs. M'Keown, when Mrs. Bailie presented the former with a barometer and the latter with a valuable gold brooch as tokens of kind regard from the pupils, teachers and friends of the Sunday School. Mr. S. M. Bailie next delighted the audience with selections on the gramophone, and Mrs. M'Keown contributed two vocal solos in a way that showed how time has only added richness to her mellifluous notes—Mrs. Buchannan playing the accompaniments on the piano, kindly lent for the occasion by Mrs. Joseph Boyd. Mrs. Buchannan, it should be acknowledged, divided the duties and honours of accompanying the vocal items of the Cantata with Miss Jane Boyd, gold medallist in pianoforte playing. Miss Boyd, it should also be said, contributed a solo on the piano in exquisite style. Before the close Mr. Kennedy referred with much pleasure to the success of the meeting, thanking the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Buchannan for their presence and valuable help, and called upon Mr. Buchannan, who closed the meeting with the Benediction.

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